Bullying: Group Heart Exercise Student Worksheet

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/bullying-education-resources/

The Heart

On your paper draw a large heart that fills up the middle like the one in the picture below:

Each of us begins as a baby depending on others to care for us. Imagine that you are holding a new born baby- what words or thoughts come to mind? With your group members share these words and write them down inside your group’s heart. When you have 10 words in your heart, talk to your group members about the feelings they get when hearing those kinds of words and think of a baby and then describe them here:

Hurts

As we continue the journey from infant to young child we often have things said to us by adults that are not so nice to hear and cause shame and embarrassment. What words/phrases are said by adults to children? As children grow up they often hear unkind words from their peers- what is said to kids and teenagers? Within your group write down all the words that you and your group members have heard-either to yourself or others. For each word put a slash in your heart, see the example below.

If you are having trouble thinking of these words, use these questions to help you get started:

- Have you ever been made fun of? What was said to you?
- Think of people who have a disability or are not good a certain subjects in school- what do teachers and fellow students say to them?
- What if someone speaks with an accent or doesn’t speak “proper” English
- What if a child was born with a big body?
- What if someone is wearing clothing that is different?
- What if a person has a different religion from most people or different traditions?
- What if people have a different color of skin or different culture - What are they called or teased about? What bad things are girls called, how about boys?
- What if your family doesn’t have very much money?
- What do kids call others who are smart at school to put them down, or what about someone who really cares about sports?
- What if someone is transgender or gay? What is said to them?

What feelings does your group have after writing down all those hurtful words? In the space below describe those feelings:

**Shields**

When people are called these words enough they often start to believe them and search for ways to shield themselves from the pain. For example, someone who is being called stupid might act silly or avoid asking questions to discourage others from teasing them. When you are teased or made fun of what do you feel like doing? Can you think of other ways that people your age cope with bad names or self-image? On your paper put a line between the hurtful words and the ways that people cope with feeling badly about themselves. See the example below:

![Diagram of shields]

Discuss within your group how putting up walls can lead to negative behavior including things that may numb the pain, but not solve the problem. Do you see examples of people who are coping with bullying around you? What does that look like? In the space below describe your group’s responses.

**Assessing the Damage - Heartbreaking**

Answer these questions together as a group:
1. Remember with your group how your heart looked and felt in the first part of this exercise; was there any reason to hurt this person with words or actions?

2. How did your heart change once it had been called bad names?

3. How hard is it to get back to the original innocent heart once walls have been put up to protect it from dealing with the pain?

4. How does it make you feel to know that your peers have been called these things?

5. Is it worse to be made fun of for something that you can’t change about yourself? Why?

Class Debrief

As an entire class discuss the answers you and your classmates arrived at from your group discussion. If there are any insights, questions, or feelings you want to share from the lesson with your classmates use this time to speak about them.